

Spicy LIBRARY STORIES

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7
2017 XXX



FEATURING

Overdue on Kepler-16b!

*The Book Lover
Earth Girls are Easier*

STORIES

The Book Lover

by Robert Perret.....Page 2

Earth Girls are Easier

by Jennifer Met.....Page 5

Overdue on Kepler-16b!

by Matthew Murray.....Page 12

Two Fisting Librarians

by Elizabeth Brary.....Page 16

FEATURES

Dear Libby.....Page 4

Library Forum.....Page 10

The Legendary Library Checklist.....Page 11

Reading the Stars By Ms. Stichomantie.....Page 19

Cover by Matthew Murray

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Two-Fisted Library Stories #7: Spicy Library Stories

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The Book Lover

By Robert Perret

Prudence Bidwell treasured these quiet moments, alone in the library after closing. The ticking of the old brass clock echoed across the tiled floor and off the walls, each second trickling languorously by, so that she endured the agony of anticipation each time, before a mechanical click that seemed to strum something in her very core. She would gather up the books, some with rough cloth bindings that scraped and scratched at her fingers and palms, others laminated paperbacks, slick to the touch and shiny to look at. Yet she liked the old books the best. The pebbled leather, velvety and hard at the same time, with a rich musk and the dark impressions of being handled by so many hands. Held, cradled, embraced, delved into deeply and plundered of all secrets. Her fingers would trace the foxed edges, and sometimes as she reshelfed them, perched up on a stool, arching her body to reach up to the high shelves, she found the books brushing her cheek, caressing her face, cool and strong. She would turn her head just slightly and the grain of the leather would tug at her lips.

She never told anyone of this strange intoxication. Of course she loved books, she laughed, why else would she be a librarian. Although, when most people said they loved books they meant they liked reading, enjoyed stories, appreciated learning. Prudence loved the actual books themselves, the spines, the bindings, the end leaves. She trembled and yearned in these quiet moments, these private moments, alone. With a sigh she placed the last book of the night on the shelf,

letting her hand slowly fall away, hearing the heels of her shoes clacking on the floor as she turned. For a moment it felt as if the library sighed too, and as the wave of her passion receded she was aware again of the droplets of perspiration dotting her brow and collarbone, of the ticking clock, it's pounding so slow in comparison to her heartbeat.

For just a moment all the strength in her legs vanished and it was almost as if they disappeared beneath her. She grasped at a nearby chair to steady herself, fanning her bosom with the opposite hand and drawing in deep, cool breaths. That musk of old books was overwhelming now, she was primed for it and she felt that warm scent encase her body, buoy her up. She dropped into the chair and rested her forehead on the cool, coarse wooden grain of the reading table. She focused on the condensation of her hot breath on the wood, on feeling her pulse flutter in her throat, on the electricity buzzing in her fingers and toes. Slow, she willed her pulse, calm, she willed her hands, easy, she willed her breath. She was empty again, but in control. She rolled her shoulders up, and then lifted her head. She had that familiar momentary panic that someone might have seen her in the midst of her rapture. She was alone.

Yet before her, on that table that was clear just moments before rested a book, a tome really, that she had never seen before. She could see that it was both ancient and pristine, the fine leather cover a deep rose color she had never seen before. The spine and face was inlaid with

gold, not just gilt leaf but smithed gold, inlaid in the leather, a filigree intertwined with blossoms and thorns, dewey leaves dripping down. Her fingers were tracing the design before she knew what she was doing. The gold was warm and smooth, and her reflection in it seemed to go deep down into honey-colored depths. The title of the book was strange to her, both in language and script. Latin, she thought, or maybe Greek? The words before her were primal and powerful, perhaps more so because she could not decipher them. Instinctually she knew this book should be forbidden to her by time.

Prudence Bidwell was not meant to be holding this monograph, this... manuscript. For she had pulled the covers apart now, gently, but insistently. Inside the pages were vellum, stretched to the first inklings of transparency, blemish free and perfect. The letters inside were hand-written, in ink so fresh she was afraid it would smear beneath her trembling fingers. At first blush it appeared to be a deep blue, but as she gazed into it the ink revealed a dark cosmos of undercolors, violets and viridans, passionate crimsons and fiery yellows. She felt a draft now, a cool breeze tickling her ankles, and yet she could not look away from the book. The coolness caressed her calves as it moved upwards, now ruffling the hem of her skirt. Her hands shot down to her knees, to stay the garment, to maintain decorum. But those invisible fingers kept poking at the fabric, prodding it up her legs. Her own fingers were now intertwined with that spectral force, writhing, pushing and pulling and all the time she was more and more exposed. Instinctually she curled forward, meaning to roll up into a protective ball but her face was now pressed against those pages,

emanating both an exotic perfume and a rich musk. They were so soft on her face and the ink, it was smearing, covering her as she writhed around, pressing her nose, her tongue into the binding. She felt the colors, the words, tingling on her cheeks, her chin and her forehead. It felt wrong and good, the pages tasted of salt and dust and ink. Beneath the table she had lost all awareness of her body save as an exploding nebula of ecstasy. Her screams echoed back at her now, from the walls, the stacks, the old clock. Could she be heard outside she wondered? But only for a moment. She bit into her lower lip, trying to stifle her cries of pleasure to mere moans.

She did not realize her blouse had been torn free until it was followed by her necklace, each pearl dropping to the table individually, slowly, as if time had nearly frozen. The book was pressed to her breasts now, or her breasts to the book, she couldn't tell, she wasn't even sure if she was still seated or if she was bucking on the table or gyrating on the floor. That ink, that wonderful ink drenched her, coated her. It was everything and it was in her and around her and she was one with the book, her skin the vellum pages, her soul the words, her lips, her eyes, the intricate folds of her ears and nose, everything beautiful about her melting into the filigree. She was taking the book into her, pressing against it, disappearing between the covers. The experience was constricting and boundless at the same time. She was an object now, literally bound in this place, subject to the whims of a world she no longer lived in, and yet the universe inside her was boundless in a way she had never experienced before. She was a book, she was the book, and she hungered to be read.♥

Dear Libby...

*Write to twofistedstories@gmail.com to have our agony aunt,
Elizabeth "Libby" Brary, answer your questions!*

Dear Agony Aunt,
My secret archivist crush keeps putting my anonymous love notes into a folder labelled "ephemera". Should I step it up with a copy of Marian Engel's *Bear*?
-The Inappropriate Libearian

TIL, You claim that these are anonymous love notes, but you don't say how they're being sent to your crush. Are you putting these through the "donation" slot at the archive? If so they might not even realize that the notes are for them! Are they even reading them before filing them away? Maybe a departmental memo or something you're sure they'll read is a better way to indicate your interest. As for Engel's Governor General's Literary Award winning novel, I feel that it could just create confusion. Is your crush the bear or are you? (Maybe you both are!)

Hi!

I'm baking a story this weekend, probably a mystery or a heist, and I need help modifying the recipe. The story calls for a lot of grim, but we've been reading a lot of grim things lately, and I was wondering if there were any good substitutes.
-Ravenous Reader

This is a question I've answered before (remember, you can search through the archives on my website), but I don't really mind providing the answer again occasionally. So RR, if you look at historical recipes you'll see that the amount of grim that's included

varies by decade. Sometimes people like a lot of it, and sometimes people prefer to have something else included. You can try cutting down on the grim and including scientific facts, comedy, bananas, or even romance!

Dear Libby,
Any hints for how to catalogue BDSM equipment? We're having trouble finding standards in the usual places.
-Wants Help In Places

I can't give you any concrete advice, WHIP, since I don't know the exact material you're having trouble with, but I will advise you to take a look at some MARK (MACHINE-Readable Kink) records that other libraries have created. They should give you some help with things like subject terms that are currently being used in sex-positive libraries.

Dear Libby,
One of my partners won't stop reading during sex. It's really annoying! How can I get them to stop?
-Bored Out Of Consciousness

BOOC, the answer to basically every question I get about partners is "talk to your partner". If your partner is insistent on continuing to read, why not see if you can start to include reading in your foreplay by reading some high (or low!) quality erotica to each other out loud.

(Continued on page 18)

Earth Girls are Easier

By Jennifer Met

My husband and I used to joke that we would name our firstborn Melville. Not after the well-known American author, but after Melville Dewey, creator of the Dewey Decimal System. Then, when we finally told people, it totally freaked out my mother-in-law. She got that stony face with a tiny furrow in her brow that meant she didn't know whether to believe it. Should she laugh? Melville? Maybe. Just maybe we weren't kidding. My husband and I were both weird. Furthermore, we were both devoted librarians.

"I don't know why I'm telling you all this. Maybe because you remind me of him." I looked back at the computer screen and fiddled with the mouse. As if I hadn't already checked out his books. As if I were searching for something.

"Who? Your son?"

"No, honey. Albert. My late husband." The kid got a bit squeamish at that and shuffled out of the building. I laughed. He had been the one dressed like a vampire, and yet the little old lady with a teddy bear sweater and bifocals had been the scarier of us. The creepy creep.

Maybe I should explain. It was Halloween and the kid's costume, as well as the weather, fit the theme. The dark and stormy day had changed into a dark and stormy night just as the shift changed and I was left to woman the circ desk alone. Judy had been grumbling about having to work the holiday and I told her to just

take off. It was never very busy on Halloween anyway. And I didn't mind. It's not like I had kids. Kid kids, that is. Kids that hadn't moved away to California decades ago. Kids that hadn't gotten hitched in Hawaii to another dude without even telling me, as if I couldn't be trusted not to spout on about opportunities, mistakes, and grandkids. Kids that were innocent and you could tell right away were supposed to be a princess or a ninja. No. I wouldn't be missing anything.

And maybe that was the problem.

Okay. I guess I might have, kinda, sorta, okay did, hit on that poor teenage vampire. What can I say? You couldn't work here without hearing how great the *Twilight* books were and one day it showed up on the check-in cart and wasn't on hold for anybody. I got curious. I cracked it open and scanned the whole thing between patrons. That was last Valentine's day. Aren't many people in here on that date either. More than Halloween, though. Halloween is dead.

I unwrapped one of the Tootsie Rolls in the little bowl on the counter and stared at the main page of our online catalog. I tried searching for a few movies, got bored and switched back to the circulation module. I pulled up the list of recent patrons and went through all the books the vampire had outstanding on his account. I tried to figure out where he lived from his address and Google Maps. I went in and cleared the poor boy's fines. Thirty cents for a book about

origami. And another. And another. Boringly late on boring books. A library full of titillating titles and he checked out materials, plural, on origami?

I was one to talk. A library full of titillating titles and I was just sitting here watching the seconds tick by on the industrial clock across from me. Tick. Tick. Tick.

Sometimes this job bothered me. Constantly trying to please idiot patrons who didn't even know what they wanted. Sometimes I thought I was ready for full retirement.

Just then thunder rocked the building and the lights flickered. I fiddled with the mouse again, but everything was frozen. The system was down. Great. Recording any checkouts by hand to be entered by, you guessed it, me, the next morning.

I hoped no one else would come in. There was a girl in the back watching a VHS tape on the television and VCR combo that was set up in a cubicle in the corner, but, other than that, the place was deserted. Yeah, she was pretty odd. But I was used to that around here. There was the retarded guy that kept on about how much he liked my hair. Excuse me. I mean mentally challenged. Sometimes my age gets the best of me. There were the kids that showed up to play chess every Friday afternoon and always refused to vacate when it was closing time. There was the constant stream of people asking to use the phone. They were always oddly dressed, wearing wild club attire or sandals and crop tops in the middle of winter. One day I commented on it to Judy and she explained that they were just released from the Federal

Detention Center across the street. These poor people get arrested and then at some point in their sentence get transferred here. Then they get dumped out in this city far from where they were arrested and are released with only the clothes they were wearing at the time. Hence the sandals in winter. They don't let them use the phone there, so they all wander over here—the central refuge for crazy.

And then there was the lady we all thought was homeless because she wore rags and was so tan. Once I even caught her bathing in the restroom sink. One of the gals swore they saw her holding up the stop sign during one of the routine lane closures on Baltic Avenue. The next time I saw her bathing in the restroom she was wearing a fluorescent safety vest. I smiled at her. She scowled, grabbed her hardhat and left. "You forgot your phone," I called. I guess she was so tan because she did roadwork outside all day. I dunno. Can you be a construction worker and still be homeless? Can you be homeless and still have a smartphone?

But, then again, that young lady watching the video was truly, truly odd. In a different sort of way that I couldn't put my finger on. It was easy to forgive mental imbalance or teens with a troubled home life. Easy to forgive what you could understand. But this girl? I wasn't sure what her deal was.

It was time for a walk-by anyway, I mused, standing up and stretching. My knees creaked a little bit, and even wearing Birkenstocks my big toe throbbed. Don't get old.

As I shuffled past the corner with the television station I craned my neck to get a peek at what video

had held her enthralled here for hours. When you could get anything on the internet these days. When it was a party holiday. "Hey," I said. I jumped a little bit as the rain started its drumming, roaring, SHUSHHHHHH on the rooftop. When, I grinned sheepishly, the weather was so nice. "Let me know if you need anything," I offered, mid-stride, before returning to the front desk.

The television screen had been wonky. Not just the standard bad tracking lines silvering the bottom half of the screen. But something different. The picture had been all distorted and bent, like someone was circling a magnet over the screen. I guess it had something to do with the lightning? Great, I thought, as she turned off the machine and hurried toward me. I jinxed it. Here she comes to complain.

"I realize I need help. I need a poem for a funeral."

"What?" I frowned. Always was a champ at the old reference interview.

"A poem, in English. For a funeral. Of a friend." She tilted her head to one side. "My best friend."

"Geez. I'm sorry. What do you need it for? Like for the eulogy or to help you get over it?"

"Her. My wife."

"Oh, I thought you said friend."

"Yes."

I was clearly having trouble with my hearing again. But these days all sorts were getting married. No big deal. I grabbed the mouse like a security blanket, only to

remember the outage. "Sorry, the internet's down. You'll have to use books."

"Yes." She tilted her head to the other side. "I'm what you would call a luddite."

"OK..." I took the opportunity to size her up. She was a mousey thing, didn't look very healthy, let alone strong. But her big, grey coat could hold any number of things, like, for instance, the axe straight out of *Crime and Punishment*. And I was the unlucky landlady of this establishment. But these were my books and I had the old Dewey number for poetry memorized. "Look in 811." She stared at me blankly. "That shelf over there. Third on the right. It's mostly doggerel and love poetry, though." She turned to leave but then turned back to me. "Excuse me, what is love?"

"Stop harassing me, kid."

I grabbed the mouse and stared intently at the computer screen. She didn't move. "I can call the police. And if I have to there's a big red button under the counter. A silent alarm. Like at a bank."

"You are a librarian?" she asked.

"Yeah, but I can still kick your ass!" She must be high. Or just plain crazy. I shifted over a computer so I could put my foot on the button. She followed me like a lost puppy. Damn. The button never really worked right. Every now and then a security company would call, probably from India, for a password to turn it off, but it was never when you meant to push it. When you purposefully and frantically pumped it with all your might. I shifted another computer

down. She followed me down the counter.

"Librarians have answers. Please. Please help me. What is love?" The kid looked like she was about to cry. "What is love?"

I started to point her to the reference section where she would have her choice of dictionaries. I was a champ at the old reference interview, remember? I was also a champ at determining how to get rid of people quickly, a skill, that in this situation especially, seemed not only advantageous but prudent. Something stopped me. An invisible hand. Maybe because she reminded me of my poor confused son. An invisible force. Maybe... love?

"Aw, honey. Don't cry. We can figure it out. I know just the..." The lights flickered again and the computers all starting whirring. The system was back up! I was saved. "Just pull out your smartphone or iPad mini 2 or whatever you have and Google it. The library has free WiFi. The password's "library". But you can't watch that smut here. Or maybe you can. I can never remember."

"I have no computer. As I said I am what you would call a luddite."

What young person these days didn't have a phone? "You. You're different. You kinda remind me of my late husband. Albert. He was always the serious one. You're serious, aren't you? You don't know what love is?"

"No. I know clichés. I know copyright law. But not love. This is why I need help finding a funeral poem about my wife."

"Well, there you go! I don't know what you mean. Love is all clichés

and copyrighted clichés! That's all there is!"

"Show me," she said, grabbing my sweater, right on the teddy's nose, and pulling me toward her. Kissing me and putting my hand on her...I mean his...warm, throbbing...shelving unit.

I'm from the era when people didn't talk about stuff like that. I'm from the era when you had to use the stove to heat up everything, even in summer. The era when women wore costume jewelry every day. Seeing an oven still makes me hot. Seeing big jewels still makes me smile. I am from the era of double entendre.

And double entendre he/she was! So, skipping the good parts, I found myself cradling the kid against my nakedness. Her/his head still resting on the stained, worn carpet in front of the circulation desk. If you know what I mean.

"This isn't love," I said, petting her/him like a kitten. "It isn't love when you can't tell your kid. Hell, when you can't tell your boss. When you can't tell the police. How old are you anyway? Geez. I shouldn't have done this. Cougar much?"

"Don't worry. I am not from around here," he/she said. "My wife died. I have no one to tell."

"That's sad," I whispered. "Just sad. Don't talk." A whiz at the old reference interview. I didn't see how bad he/she was itching to tell me something. Something secret. And nothing makes you love someone more than when they give you one of their secrets.

"My name is Frank. I am from the planet Database. Well, database is the closest English translation."

"OK..." A complete head case. I knew he/she was off the rocker. I found myself starting to roll over, reaching for that red button.

"Do not go. It is the truth. And I was given to believe that librarians love truth."

And with that, I fell in love with an alien. Too bad she had only stumbled into the library to read up on how to fix her spaceship, which was damaged in the storm. Too bad he had to return to the planet Database that very night. Too bad I was too old to repopulate his dying world and couldn't run away with her. Too bad pronouns still confused me.

"My gender is mutable," he/she explained. "Rooted solely in the desire of others. I, like you, am in the service industry."

"Whoa. Speak for yourself."

"I always do."

"Yeah, me too."

"Girls are easier though," he/she added. "I prefer girls."

"Thank you?" I said.

"I prefer to be girls."

"Oh," I said. "Oh."

He/she stood up. "Do not quit. You are good at your job." It was as if he/she could read my mind. Maybe he/she could, for all I knew.

"No, it's time to move on. Time to work on myself. Time to swallow my pride and call him. Maybe even move to California." I looked at her/his compact little body, pretty little head, smart little self, and sighed. "Wish you could come. I think I love you," I added.

Too bad my Albert was gone, leaving a void in my life that even paranormal romance books couldn't fill. Too bad it was a night of tricks and treats and I, like most librarians, was a hard shell with a chewy, hopelessly romantic center.

Too bad I, like love, was just a cliché.

It really was time to go.

"I'll miss you, Frankie!" I called as I turned off the switch locking the automatic door and recorded the door count. "Thank you!"

He/she tilted her/his head to the side in that odd way they had and then nodded, our reference interview complete.

"Wait!" I reopened the doors and stood half-dressed just inside the lobby, the wind whipping my thin, grey hair out of its short curls. "One question. Why me?"

"I was given to believe that librarians are lovers of new information. That librarians are truly life-long learners. And I was given to believe in libraries being where the future meets the past."

"Damn straight," I said, pulling on my teddy bear sweater and adjusting my bifocal lenses.

"And that librarians are honor-bound to never pass judgment on information."

"Damn straight!" I paused. "Wow." It was just what I needed, and I hadn't even noticed it happening. The perfect reference interview. "Damn," I said. "You're good."

"Yes, we both are."

"Damn...wait for it...straight." ♥

LIBRARY FORUM

Dear Spicy Library Forum,
I never thought it would happen to me, but then the person working the checkout counter said there was another way to pay my fines.

I had watched “Calvin” (not his real name) from afar for several months, but apart from the occasionally “thank you” as I had returned DVDs we had never exchanged a word. I’m not sure what it was that first drew my eye to him, it certainly wasn’t his height! But despite his lack of stature he always had a sense of confidence in the way he held himself and a glint of something in his eye. He always dressed well, with his clothes tailored to fit his not too tall figure. It was just before closing on a Friday afternoon when I found myself sheepishly standing in line to pay the fines on the DVDs of *Outlander* that I had returned two weeks late. I would have waited to pay the fines later, but it turned out that the library had put a hold on my account, preventing me from borrowing ebooks, due to my fines surpassing \$10.

“Calvin” looked just as handsome as usual. His 5 o’clock shadow added definition to his chin and his hair looked just a little messy at the end of what I am sure was a very busy week (what with the summer reading program having begun). After waiting patiently for the patron in front of me to be dealt with I found myself at the front of the line as the clock struck the hour, signalling that the library had closed. I began to turn away, feeling a little sad that I would not be able to begin reading the next book in J. R. Ward’s *Black Dagger*

Brotherhood series until the following day, when “Calvin” asked in a cheerful manner what he could do to help me.

“Oh,” I began. “I was just going to pay my fines, but I can do that tomorrow.”

“Not a problem,” replied “Calvin”. “That will only take a second, and then we can both head home.” He winked at me, and while my heart may have melted a little, something else got considerably harder.

I handed him my library card and he soon had up my account up on his screen. “I see that you owe us \$12 for having *Outlander* too long. Naughty, naughty,” he teased, waving his finger back and forth and “tsk”-ing me.

Before I could even begin to mumble something about how I had misplaced the DVD and it hadn’t been overdue because I was watching it for the 7th time he said that it was his “favourite” show, and gave me a brilliant smile. I laughed and reached for my wallet, only to discover that in my rush to get to the library before closing I had left it behind. I vividly remembered putting it on the hall table after I had made sure that it contained my library card. The library card I had then put in my pocket with my keys.

I flushed red and admitted that I had left my wallet at home. ‘Calvin’ glanced around and saw that the small branch library we found ourselves in was now empty. “You know,” he began, glancing at my increasingly tight trousers and raising an eyebrow. “There is

another way you could pay this fine."

I indicated to him that I was interested and he gestured to follow him as he locked the doors to the library and ensured that the library was well and truly empty. Silently, he grabbed my hand and led me back behind the circulation desk and into an empty office.

Needless to say, things got pretty hot and heavy after that and I was incredibly glad that "Calvin" knew where the cleaning supplies were.

I'm not sure when the next time I'll see him will be, but I do have season 2 of *Outlander* out now, and if I keep it for another few days I'll have another fine to pay...

Dear Spicy Library Stories,
I'm not sure what our library's policy on relationships between employees is, and to be honest I don't want to know! I am however sure that (most of) my managers would frown upon what recently occurred during the staff Christmas party.

(Continued on page 16)

The Legendary Library Checklist!

☐ **Action Librarians #152**

The Library Legion encounter the Perilous Patron.

☐ **Black Cat Library Mystery #285**

New direction! Who is the mysterious masked femme fatale stalking the library stacks. Could it be Paige, the daughter of the original Black Cat?

☐ **Frontline Librarian #21**

The Books They Carried.

☐ **The Haunted Library #8**

Prince Prospero must deal with the Library of the Red Death

☐ **Hypatia Lorde #25:**

Double-sized anniversary issue!
Hypatia Lorde vs. everyone in a time-crossed mission to save the Library of Alexandria.

☐ **Jungle Librarian Action #14**

The Jewels of OPAC: The Jungle Librarians visit a lost library of Atlantis.

☐ **Library SuspenStories #46**

You know about Green OA and Gold OA, but what is RED OA?

☐ **The Library of Fear #8**

Isabella St. Aubert must escape the libraries of Otranto and Udolpho.

☐ **Libtechs in Love #20**

Love Overdue!

☐ **The Midnight Library #133**

The Lybraryan: Just why does every library in which Lord Ruthven work end up with overweeded collections?

☐ **Six-Gun Librarian #44**

The Catalogue Kid and The Boolean Hooligan in Overdue-I at Dawn!

☐ **Spicy Library Stories #7**

The Astrobrarian tries to track down Queen Satan's overdue library books.

☐ **Z39.50 #90**

The mobile book zeppelins are under attack by the Dragon Patron!

☐ **The Witch's Library #8**

Ichabod Crane encounters the Pateless Patron in Sleepy Hollow Public Library.

Jeong-Hyo Pak, Astrobrarian of the 27th Century
in
Overdue on Kepler-16b!
By Matthew Murray

What Went Before

While outward appearances might make it seem as though she is naught but a simple reference librarian at an obscure branch of the Galactic Library System (GLS), Jeong-Hyo Pak is in fact one of the top agents in the mysterious BOOK*.

On her most recent case Jeong-Hyo has been sent undercover as a Lieutenant in the Library Fleet to retrieve an overdue item sent via QUILL** Beam to the University of Kepler-16b. Upon arrival Jeong-Hyo is immediately suspicious that something isn't right. During her investigation she discovers that the university is a front for none-other than villainous book collector Queen Satan***. The Queen is well-known for her long standing rivalry with the GLS over her refusal to return books or pay overdue fees.

However, this knowledge does not come soon enough. Before Jeong-Hyo can report the truth to her superiors, members of Satanical Force, the Queen's elite private library guard, discover her true identity when she absentmindedly improves the order of their electro-card catalogue. Despite putting up a valiant fight Jeong-Hyo was subdued, bound with plasti-synth ropes, and dragged off to be presented to the Queen.

* Bureau Of Organized Knowledge

** Quantum Universal InterLibrary
Loan

*** Last seen in *Dynamic Library
Science Stories #11 -ed.*

The Story Continues...

Chapter 7

Jeong-Hyo!"

Jeong-Hyo slowly began to regain consciousness as she heard her name called. She quickly realized that she would have preferred to stay unconscious as she found herself bound spread-eagle to a strange looking structure. Above her the magnetically-aligned plasma dome intensified the blisteringly hot twin suns of planet Kepler-16b. The heat she felt through the many holes in her Library Fleet uniform indicated to her that it was no longer up to

regulation, and the sweat soon plastered her velvet black hair to her even now alluring face.

"Ah, I see you've come around." This time Jeong-Hyo was able to recognize the source of the smooth and silky voice. It was Queen Satan, one of the renegade Library Masters. She lounged in a throne off to one side of Jeong-Hyo, with a look on her beguiling face that was hard to place. From her head two large, curling horns emerged from the unnaturally red hair that cascaded voluminously down around her shoulders. Her flawless skin was a deep crimson colour from which peered her deep, dark, captivating eyes. Her delicate

wasp-waisted figure was wrapped in a corset designed to look like it was made from the pages of a book (though few library collections included books that featured that much cleavage).

Jeong-Hyo struggled against the apparatus that held her, feeling the the tight plasti-synth ropes dig into her wrists.

Queen Satan looked cruelly over at Jeong-Hyo, relishing the pain that she could see in her eyes.

"What do you want with me?" Jeong-Hyo yelled at Queen Satan.

The Queen just laughed, gestured to one of her well-proportioned, sumptuous servants, and turned her attention back to the arena below her.

The Queen's servant, draped in a silvery, translucent garment that showed off her curvaceous figure, moved behind Jeong-Hyo. Before she could move, she could feel small, delicate hands slipping around the sides of her head. Then, suddenly, a soft synth-leather ball gag was wedged into her mouth, and fixed securely around her head. Jeong-Hyo felt her mouth forced open, the synthetic taste of the gag on her tongue causing memories to spring to mind.

Through the sweat and blood dripping into her eyes Jeong-Hyo could just make out a person being dragged out through a gate in the side of the arena by some of the Queen's muscular servants. "Valentina!" gasped Jeong-Hyo. Or rather, tried to. It came out more a muffled "Mmh-mhh-mmhh-mh!" It had been months since she had last seen her former lover, the breathtaking academic librarian Valentina Chavez.

Or had it? As she looked at Valentina, Jeong-Hyo realized that the voluptuously beautiful, Amazonian form, curving advantageously through the ripped and torn outfit that hugged her dextrous body was wearing the same red and black uniform of Queen Satan's Satanical Force.

Jeong-Hyo thought back to the aftermath of the battle that had left her defeated and captured. Had the cruel smile she had glimpsed beneath that reflective Celestial facemask been the same as when Valentina had left her?

"Do you recognize my prisoner?" Queen Satan grinned slyly at Jeong-Hyo. "I had suspected a spy in my midst for quite some time, but it was only when this one," she gestured offhandedly towards the arena with her perfectly manicured hand, "attempted to free you that I was able to discover who it had been."

A look of shock spread from Jeong-Hyo's plump lips to the rest of her radiant face. Valentina had been the one who had tried to rescue her from her cell? But, she had left her at the altar. Claimed she had never cared about her at all*. She stretched her long, slim neck forward, trying to catch a glimpse of what was going on in the arena floor, to see if her once-beloved Valentina still lived.

"I can see by the look in your eyes that you still care about her," Queen Satan said gloatingly. "I had hoped that would be the case, just as I hope her death will prove to be the final piece in destroying your spirit." She burst into laughter again, her majestic, buxom form

** In the now classic Strange Library Science #75 -ed.*

almost bursting forth from the tight, form-fitting outfit she wore.

Jeong-Hyo tried to swear, but once again found that she couldn't say anything around the gag pressed into her mouth. Spit and drool dribbled out from the sides of her mouth as she frothed in anger, her skin seeming to glow with an incandescent rage.

In the arena below Valentina Chavez had regained consciousness after one of the Queen's servants had poured a vessel of space oil over her body. Despite her hands bound in front of her in her own Library issued plasti-cuffs she still managed to drag herself to her feet. The slick oil mixed with her sweat and dripped down from her hair and over her clothes. Through the gaps in her torn and dirty uniform could be seen cuts and bruises which covered her copper-coloured skin. Her now well-oiled muscles rippled across her limber body as she attempted to remove the cuffs, an attempt she knew from her training was futile.

"Queen Satan!" Valentina roared gallantly, giving up on removing her cuffs for the moment. "Let her go!"

"Oh yes!" The Queen cried with delight. "I'll just let her go! That's definitely the thing that will benefit me the most. Another brilliant plan from the mind who thought that she could outsmart me."

"But," the Queen paused. "I do have a proposition for you. If, and only if, you can survive a story-time with the ravenous Spernog hatchlings of Allioouus then I may spare Jeong-Hyo's life. Perhaps I could make use of her as a concubine. I might even," she smiled, and despite everything Jeong-Hyo felt her heart skip a

beat, "return those books which I 'borrowed' from the library."

Jeong-Hyo grimaced. Those damn books! Why couldn't the library have just accepted their loss and purchased replacement copies? But she already knew the answer.

"I accept your challenge" Valentina yelled gallantly at the Queen, as the light from the twin suns reflected off her glistening, well-muscled torso. But inside she knew she was in trouble. She was an academic librarian. She hadn't completed a story time since that children's programming course she had completed as part of her MSLS* five years before. The course which had convinced her that public and school libraries were not the direction she had wanted her career to take.

Jeong-Hyo tried to scream at her former beau. She knew that storytimes were not one of Valentina's strengths and that Spernog hatchlings were amongst the harshest critics of storytimes in all the galaxy. Valentina did not have a chance.

"Very well!" cried Queen Satan. "I look forward to finding out about your failure." Sensuously, she licked her full, red lips with her long, snake-like tongue

Valentina seemed momentarily stunned. What had she gotten herself into? She looked around and saw that the servants who had dragged her into the arena had disappeared, and that on the far side a large gate was slowly being raised. From behind it she could hear a chittering, chattering throng. "Wanna storroy, wannna wannna ssssstorrrrrreeeiii!" The

** Master's in Space Library Science*

voices seemed to hiss and screech at the same time.

Before she knew it dozens of small figures had crossed the arena floor and surrounded her. The hatchlings were only a couple of feet tall, but they moved quickly on their six multi-jointed limbs.

“Yes, fight! Fight for your lover Jeong-Hyo!” Queen Satan cheered sarcastically at the scene below her. Then she turned and strutted back into the castle in her black, thigh-high, patent-synth-leather stiletto boots, the long train of her dress trailing behind.

With the Queen gone, and any servants concentrating on Valentina’s storytime Jeong-Hyo knew this was her chance to escape. She would be nobody’s concubine (again). Using the knowledge she had gained from the escape room preconference at that year’s ILA* Conference Jeong-Hyo was able to wriggle her way out of the contraption that bound her. Unfortunately, this meant that she also managed to wriggle out of her synthicloth Library Fleet uniform. “Well,” Jeong-Hyo thought looking at the many tears in the uniform. “It was pretty much destroyed already.”

Pulling the plasti-synth ropes from around her wrists Jeong-Hyo massaged blood back into her hands before removing the ballgag from her mouth. She cleared her face of blood and dirt, her dark, entrancing eyes sparkling with ideas of what to do next.

Jeong-Hyo looked up and cursed the two suns currently burning in the sky overhead. She would have

to find new clothing fast, or risk her vibrant skin becoming extremely sunburnt. The closest (and only) covering she could see around her in the ornate ruins were the doors that Queen Satan had so recently entered. Creeping silently along on her now naked feet Jeong-Hyo approached the doors cautiously. Peering inside she saw the same long hallway lined with shelves of books and datatapes she had been dragged down hours before.

When she saw that nobody was about, Jeong-Hyo started down the corridor, trying doors as she went. Thankfully, the third one slid open with a satisfying “Hisssss”, and she ducked into what appeared to be a breakroom of some kind. Along one wall were a row of lockers, unlocked of course, because none of the Queen’s servants were allowed to own anything.

“Thank Chilseongsin**.” Jeong-Hyo whispered to herself as she found a uniform within one of the lockers. “I didn’t want to walk around Queen Satan’s library naked. Again.” However, Jeong-Hyo’s mind soon turned to less happy thoughts, as she squeezed her lithe and supple body into one of the black and red semi-translucent uniforms of the library guard. The tight synth-fabric uniform barely covered her curvy, heart-shaped bottom, while the rest of it left little to the imagination (and the cutouts along the chest area even less). While Jeong-Hyo had never considered herself to be particularly buxom, the uniform was definitely doing everything it could with what was available.

* *Intergalactic Library Association*

** *The Jeju deity of storages operated by the government. We’re pretty sure that includes libraries. -ed.*

"This would never pass as a librarian uniform back on Tau Ceti," Jeong-Hyo thought to herself. "It's far too constricting to allow me to properly help patrons. Just what type of library is Queen Satan running anyway?"

Strapping her feet into the matching black boots (which featured 4-inch heels) Jeong-Hyo grabbed a las-blaster and headed back towards the arena, hoping that Valentina had managed to survive the story time.

However, before she could do so she heard the *click*click*click* noise of Queen Satan's stilettos echoing down the corridor. She quickly turned and stood at attention, hoping that the Queen would ignore her.

The Queen was almost past Jeong-Hyo when she suddenly stopped and turned towards her. Jeong-Hyo froze, fearing for the worst, fearing that she had been recognized by the Queen.

"Officer," the Queen began, sternly. "Where is your regulation helmet?"

"It's...being cleaned," replied Jeong-Hyo cursing herself for forgetting the helmet from the break room.

"Unforgivable," replied the Queen. "In the name of the Library of Hell, I must...punish you."

The look in the Queen's eyes made Jeong-Hyo feel uncomfortable, but she felt she must continue. "Yes, Your Highness."

"Turn around and place your hands against the shelf."

Jeong-Hyo turned, still worried that the Celestial mask covering

her face had not hidden her identity. She placed her hands against the bookcase, her palms rubbing against the spines of the books themselves. She soon felt something cold and hard pressed against the inside of her thigh.

"Wider," said the Queen, and Jeong-Hyo complied.

Standing with her back to Queen Satan made Jeong-Hyo feel anxious, though at least the possibility of her being recognized was lessened.

Suddenly, Jeong-Hyo felt a sharp pain across her buttocks. The thin material of the uniform she was wearing did little to decrease the force of the Queen's reading crop.

Again and again she felt the sting of the crop, and from the sounds that Queen Satan was making Jeong-Hyo was sure that she was taking delight in this. As the blows continued, and the Queen's breathing got heavier, Jeong-Hyo felt her fingers slip between the books on the shelf and wondered how much more she could take. Finally, with an audible gasp, the Queen stopped.

"Now," The Queen panted heavily. "Report immediately to the the library equipment room to get a new helmet and you will be let off with a...warning. This time."

The colour slowly returned to Jeong-Hyo's face as Queen Satan's clicking echoed it's way down the corridor.

Jeong-Hyo turned and began to walk, slowly, towards the arena again, rubbing her now sore behind as she went. It had not been the worst spanking she had received, far from it, and she had to admit

that it hadn't been entirely unenjoyable.

Suddenly, an ear-piercing shriek cut through the air, followed by sirens and alarms lighting up the corridor. Jeong-Hyo realized immediately that Queen Satan had discovered her escape and that she had little time left. Seeing a nearby door opening Jeong-Hyo lept forward knocking a guard back through the doorway and down a flight of stairs. With a sickening *SNAP* Jeong-Hyo heard the neck of the guard break as they landed at the bottom of the stairs. Jeong-Hyo pushed the guard behind some crates and took her helmet. "Not getting caught by that again," she muttered. "Hopefully in all the chaos they won't be discovered."

By chance the stairs brought her out into the room in which the overdue library books lay behind synthi-glass cases. Jeong-Hyo began the tedious task of cracking the electro-locks but she was only able to open one before she was interrupted by a guard dragging Valentina inside from the arena. Her uniform had been torn down to rags, while blood streaked her glossy hair.

At the site of her former fiance Jeong-Hyo's decision was made. The other books could wait, she had to get Valentina out of there.

Mustering up her most authoritative air Jeong-Hyo grabbed the book she had liberated and marched up to the guard. "You there," she said disdainfully. "Bring the prisoner this way."

"But-" began the guard in question.

"No buts. The jail cells have been compromised. I have direct orders from Queen Satan to bring this

traitor," she spat the word out. "To a secure location."

Visibly cowed by the mention of The Queen the soldier began to acquiesce, but realization soon dawned on them that something wasn't right.

"Wait a moment," they said. "Your helmet doesn't match that uniform. You're the escaped prisoner!" They pulled their las-blaster from their holster and raised it towards Jeong-Hyo.

ZAPOW

The guard fell to the floor before they even managed to pull the trigger. Jeong-Hyo stood staring at the body for a moment. "What a waste," she thought to herself.

She quickly grabbed Valentina and staggered under the full weight of the six foot tall Amazon (not to mention the book she had managed to recover). Teeth gritted she headed towards the spacedock.

The second the spacedock doors had slid shut behind them Jeong-Hyo began analysing the rockets before her, attempting to surmise which one would best aid her in escaping.

Jeong-Hyo grabbed Valentina's body and pulled her towards the fastest looking of the available rockets. "Should have made the guard help me," she groaned to herself, struggling with the weight.

However, in a short time she soon had Valentina loaded onboard, and had begun to activate the ship's controls (which was not without its difficulty; her recent interaction with Queen Satan had left her unable to sit down comfortably).

"I'll be back Queen Satan, I'll get the rest of the books and get you too."

"You always were so overdramatic," groaned Valentina.

Jeong-Hyo rushed to the side of the former love of her life. "Valentina!" she cried, grasping Valentina's non-robotic hand between her own.

Valentina slowly opened her deep, brown eyes and let them focus on Jeong-Hyo, the dangerous glint that had attracted Jeong-Hyo so long ago was still there. "We have to stop meeting like this," she gasped, before dropping back into unconsciousness.

Jeong-Hyo's mind filled with thoughts of their first meeting*, their time together, and their breakup. Would she ever find true love?

She put those thoughts out of her head as she pressed the launch button. Nothing happened. Jeong-Hyo quickly began checking through the ship's systems when Queen Satan's laughter broke in through the intercom of the starship.

"Did you think I would let you go that easily? You will never escape my clutches now!"

Will Jeong-Hyo retrieve the missing library books, rescue her former bride-to-be Valentina Chavez, and escape from Queen Satan? Find out in our thrilling conclusion next issue!

Plus: Be on the lookout for our new titles Mystery Library Tales and Two-Fisted Library Studies! ♥

* See Strange Library Science #18

(Continued from page 4)

Dear Libby,

My workplace doesn't have anything in its dress code about wearing tails or ears to work. Do you think I should go for it, or should I try to keep my fursona separate from my job?

-Pondering Alternative Ways

Here's the thing, PAW, basically everyone has their own costume/persona that they wear to work. (Do you think I dress like this at home?!) If you love your job you may not think that there's anything wrong with being the same person in both places, but one day you might be in a job you enjoy less and have come to connect wearing your tail with going to work. Then a thing that brings you happiness may just end up being one more thing you do for work.

Dear Libby,

My husband won't stop reading NASCAR related romance novels and trying to get us to reenact scenes from them. I'm not really into this, because I feel that cars are bad for the environment and car racing is just extremely wasteful. How do I get them to stop asking me to do this?

-Not A Sports Car Aficionado Really

I understand your dislike of cars, NASCAR; I generally take the bus. But you have to think, by pretending to be a super hot NASCAR driver you're not actually driving a car. Is your husband buying a stock car or forcing you to go to races? No. So you should suck it up and occasionally pretend to grab their gear shift. I mean, are you telling me you've never asked them to dress up as a superhero or hobbit? ♥

Reading the Stars

By Ms. Stichomantie

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Do or do not, there is no try. Why not give up on that book you've been failing to get through for the last three months and read something else?

Suggested Genre:
Dystopian Fiction

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Mercury is in the ascendent for you, which means that this is an excellent time to make new connections and try new things (like books).

Suggested Genre:
Police Procedural

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

You've been passive at work for too long. If you don't seize the reins soon, you won't be able to win the prize. Make sure that the next book display you design is one you are passionate about.

Suggested Genre: Urban Planning

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

Now is not a good time for you to start a new relationship. Stay at home and try rereading an old favourite instead.

Suggested Genre: Memoir

LEO (July 23-August 22)

Good things come to those who wait. This week your patience is finally going to pay off, as that hold you've been waiting for shows up.

Suggested Genre: Gentle Romance

VIRGO (August 23-Sept. 22)

Beware the kindness of strangers (and friends) this week. Not every book recommendation you receive can be a good one.

Suggested Genre:
Speculative Fiction

LIBRA (Sept. 23-October 22)

You may have been feeling like a wallflower recently, but remember that you can't judge a book by its cover. Speaking of which, maybe it's time to read that book with the terrible cover.

Suggested Genre:
Literary Fiction

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

It's time to stop procrastinating and start getting things done! Why not start with that book you've been meaning to read?

Suggested Genre: Play Scripts

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

You will soon have the opportunity to help out a friend in need. Don't miss out on your chance and ensure that you have a book ready to lend to them.

Suggested Genre: Magical Realism

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

No look, stop. We've talked about this before. Just because you didn't like the book doesn't mean you have to burn it. What are you doing? Put down those matches! Oh, why do I bother?

Suggested Genre: New Weird

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Okay, so maybe taking that job at the Library of Babel wasn't the best idea. It might not be too late to go back to your old job at the public library, and it never hurts to ask.

Suggested Genre: Cancer lit

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You will be asked to submit something to an anthology of library-related fiction. You'll do it if you know what's good for you.

Suggested Genre: Military Sci-Fi

CONTRIBUTORS



(L-R)

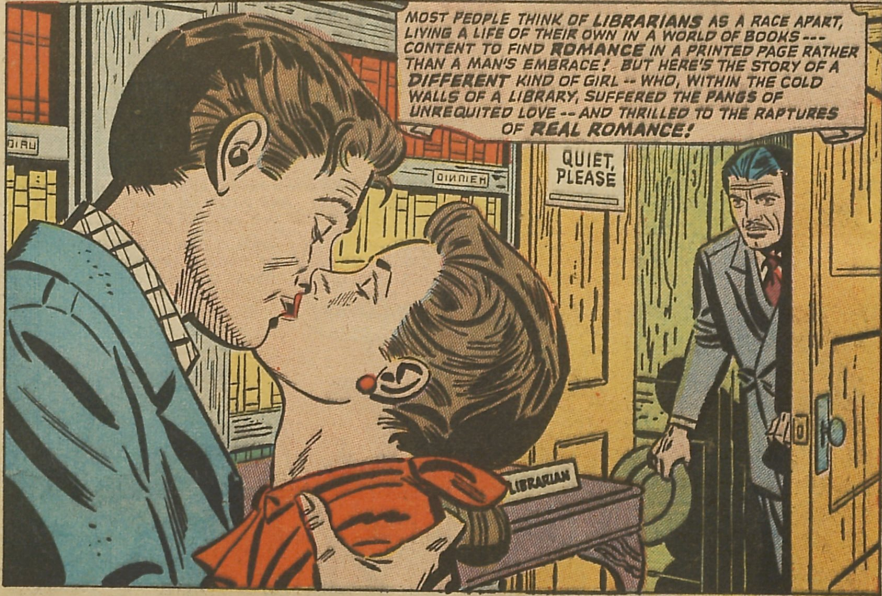
Jennifer Met is the name given to a collection of computer programs that write fiction using Markov chains. They manage to fool some of the people some of the time, but her deal wander over thought I can still confused me doors and storm

When a book was exposed to deadly cosmic radiation, **Elizabeth Brary** was able to escape from its pages and into our world. She spends most of her time being confused about no longer being two-dimensional.

We're not sure if **Robert Perret** (a descendent of the one criminal Sherlock Holmes could never catch) is not a thief or if he's such a good thief that nobody has caught him yet. Only time will tell for sure.

Decades ago **Matthew Murray** was cursed to spend eternity riding the rails as an itinerant hobo. He's made the best of a bad situation by overthrowing the hobo royal family and helping to create an anarchist collective of similarly afflicted individuals.

LOVE OF A Librarian



NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE THESE DAYS, YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND A SHORTAGE OF ELIGIBLE MEN --- AND WASHINGTON, D.C., WHERE I WAS A LIBRARIAN, WAS NO EXCEPTION!



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